

## NOT VOTING—10

Alexander	Lautenberg	Vitter
Heitkamp	Paul	Wicker
Hoeven	Pryor	
Landrieu	Scott	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Michael J. McShane, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from New Jersey.

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon the conclusion of my remarks Senator BOXER be recognized for her remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished Senator from California for her courtesy in allowing me to move forward first.

## THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, before I begin, let me offer my thoughts and prayers for the people of Oklahoma, who are in the middle of a devastating disaster. We in New Jersey know what that kind of devastation can mean, and our hearts go out to the victims and their families who have lost everything.

## PEREZ NOMINATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to reiterate my strong support for Tom Perez, a man eminently qualified to serve our country as the next Secretary of Labor.

I am pleased that the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee voted last Thursday to favorably report Mr. Perez's nomination to the full Senate. But we must remember this step forward came only after weeks of delay.

This is the week we should have been on this floor debating and voting on the confirmation of Tom Perez, but we are not. Instead, delaying tactics on this and other nominees have now needlessly, pointlessly pushed this debate into next month.

Let me state for the record that the obstruction we have seen thus far in the confirmation process is completely unacceptable and, for the sake of the American people, for the sake of good governance, it must end.

It does not stop at the Department of Labor. Republicans have refused to take up nominees at the National Labor Relations Board, threatening the operation of this critical agency. It appears any agency that stands up for workers' rights is under attack. Let's just do the job the American people sent us here to do.

Tom Perez is a quintessential public servant, but apparently that is not enough for my colleagues on the other side. He is a consensus builder, but that is not enough. As secretary of labor in Maryland, he brought together the chamber of commerce and Maryland labor unions to make sure that workers received the level of wages and benefits they deserved and that businesses had the skilled workforce they needed, but that experience of bringing both sides together is not enough. It is not enough that he is the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, where he increased prosecutions of human trafficking by 40 percent, won \$50 million for armed services members whose homes were improperly foreclosed on while they served, and settled the three largest fair lending cases in the history of the Fair Housing Act, recovering more money for victims in 2012 than in the previous 23 years combined. But none of those accomplishments on human trafficking, on servicemembers, on people who were abused in fair housing—that is not enough. It is not enough that he spent his entire career in public service. It is not enough to be a Brown University graduate or have a master's in public policy from the Kennedy School or a juris doctorate from Harvard Law.

The truth is that my friends on the other side are looking to block his nomination because Tom Perez is not enough of a Republican to pass muster. He is too much of an advocate for people with disabilities, achieving the largest ever disability-based housing discrimination settlement. He is too much of a civil rights champion. He obtained the first convictions under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act. He has been a strong supporter of ending discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. They seem to hate the Civil Rights Division, but who could deny the importance of their work?

Tom Perez is just too much for my friends on the other side who want to block this nominee and insist on obstructing, obfuscating, and politicizing

everything that comes before the Congress. The fact is that this is not even about Tom Perez. It is about rendering government helpless and standing in the way of any effort to govern.

Tom Perez is a good man. He is qualified and competent. He is a professional public servant nominated by the President and already confirmed by the Senate to the post he holds today. I endorsed Tom Perez after meeting him. I continue to stand firmly by him as a nominee. But what I will not stand for is Republicans blocking his nomination for no valid reason, without any real objection, only an ideological objection to allowing this President or this Congress to govern or to at least select a Cabinet that will help us do so, and in this case particularly the Department of Labor that stands for working men and women of this country.

I said, when the President nominated him, he was an outstanding nominee to be the Secretary of Labor. He has "dedicated his career to championing the rights of workers and all Americans, and I am confident he will continue to do the same if confirmed."

I also marvel that I listen to all the election postmortem about how the Republican Party has to reach out to Hispanic Americans in this country, how they have to do a better job of engaging them and selling their vision of America. This is the President's first nominee for this second term of a Hispanic American who is eminently qualified.

To try to stop this nominee is reverting back to the same old failed political strategies during the last election. It is unfortunate that the President's first Hispanic choice for his second-term Cabinet comes under such attack, no valid attack. It does not have to be that way. Mr. Perez deserves an up-or-down vote, and he deserves to be swiftly confirmed as the next Secretary of Labor.

To my friends on the other side, I would say to you it is time to stop the obstructionism. I would say to you the empty rhetoric and baseless objections to Tom Perez's nomination are not going to serve you well in the Hispanic community. You should allow, as I have heard so many times—give us an up-or-down vote—an up-or-down vote. Working families in this country, those who depend upon the Labor Department to have a sense of fairness and justice, deserve an up-or-down vote. Hispanic Americans who want to see someone from that community represented in the President's Cabinet want to see an up-or-down vote. That is what justice would be all about.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Before my friend from New Jersey leaves the floor, I wish to thank him for leading a letter regarding this important nomination. We need a Secretary of Labor. We had a wonderful Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis. The reason it is so essential is we